REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are all the claims pending in the application.

According to the present invention two mutually parallel and spaced apart longitudinal metal elements 4 are "strip" elements, where "strip" is the English translation of the Italian word "nastro" which identifies an elongate "flat" element. In claim 1 the term "coplanar" clearly implies that the spaced apart metal strips are flat. In the patent to Zarife et al. and Takano the stripes are in the form of wires having a circular cross-section.

Also, according to the present invention, each of the plurality of metal cross-members 5 is "rigidly" and "directly" connected to both the metal strips 4 and each metal cross-member 5 "constitutes the core" of a respective tooth 6 of the toothed belt. In Zarife et al. and Takano the transverse reinforcement members are connected to the longitudinal elements by means of the elastomer material, so that the transverse members are not "directly" and "rigidly" connected to the longitudinal elements.

A basic feature of the present invention lies in the fact that the metal cross-member 5 has a cross-section whose shape defines the shape of the cross-section of the respective tooth 6, and the elastomer material constitutes only a simple coating applied to the outer surface of the metal cross-elements 5. Therefore, in this case, the metal cross-element 5 defines the geometry and the shape of the body of the tooth 6 and provides it with high dimensional stability. This feature can be firstly derived from claim 1 as filed, where it is stated that the elastomer material is a coating applied on the metal core, as well as from the feature set forth in claim 2 as originally filed, and in particular from the word "consequently" which specifies that the shape of the tooth is a consequence of the shape of the metal cross-member. The elastomer material in this case has only the purpose of a protective layer.

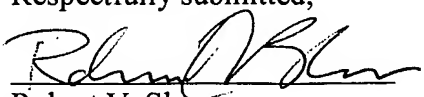
In Zarife et al. and Takano the transverse reinforcement members increase the transversal rigidity of the tooth, but do not define the geometry and the shape of the body of the teeth. Moreover, in Zarife et al. and Takano the elastomer material has the purpose of connecting the transverse reinforcement members to the longitudinal elements.

New claim 12 which is dependent from claim 1, specifically sets forth that each of the metal cross-members has a cross section whose shape defines the shape of the cross-section of the respective tooth, said elastomer material constituting a coating applied on the outer surface of said metal cross-members. Such a feature is not shown or described in any of the references cited and applied in the last Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and arguments, it is submitted that claims 1-10 and 12 are clearly patentable over the prior art and is respectfully requested that these claims be allowed in the application passed the issue forthwith.

If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application and in the next Office Action and feels that an interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned Attorney for the purpose of arranging such and interview.

Respectfully submitted,



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23373
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Date: February 1, 2006